DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 044 187 RC 003 374

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TITLE The Somerton Story, Part I. A Progress Report on the Somerton Demonstration School for Migrant Child Education.
SPONS AGENCY Arizona State Dept. of Public Instruction, Phoenix. Div. of Migrant Child Education.
PUB DATE Nov 68
NOTE 18p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.00
DESCRIPTORS Breakfast Programs, Demonstration Projects, *Educational Facilities, *Educational Programs, Elementary Schools, *Health Services, *Inservice Teacher Education, Junior High Schools, Kindergarten, Language Programs, Lunch Programs, *Migrant Child Education, Preschool Programs, Ungraded Classes
IDENTIFIERS *Somerton Demonstration School

ABSTRACT

You are invited to take a tour of the Somerton School District No. 11, Somerton, Arizona, to see what is being accomplished in migrant child education. The 1968 enrollment in the district consists of 950 students (kindergarten through grade 8) from the community cf Somerton and the surrounding farms, ranches, and labor camps. The Somerton program, initiated in 1967, is an attempt to help sclve the many educational problems facing the migrant child. Stops on the tour will give you an opportunity to see (1) the pre-first-grade language-experience and readiness program; (2) the health program which includes a school nurse as well as medical and dental care from local doctors; (3) three ungraded primary classrooms; (4) the school cafeteria which serves breakfast and lunch whether the children are able to pay or not; (5) the intermediate and junior high school programs which include home economics, industrial arts, and physical education; (6) the Resource Center, which is the heart of the instructional program; and (7) the inservice training program for teachers of migrant children. (A related document is RC 004 833.) (EJ)

EDO 44187

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THE SOMERTON STORY

Part I

A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SOMERTON DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL FOR MIGRANT CHILD EDUCATION

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November, 1968

RC 003 374

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

WITHOUT THE COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE FROM THE FOLLOWING, THE SOMERTON STORY AS RELATED ON THESE PAGES WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE:

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STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The late Mrs. Sarah Folsom, Superintendent
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Dear Reader:

It has been increasingly apparent since the initial implementation of a demonstration Migrant Educational Program in Somerton that there has been a continual attempt to improve educational opportunities for migrant children. Special efforts are being made to share these experiences with others through the printing of "The Somerton Story".

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the administrators and teachers at Somerton who have shown so much interest and have done so much work in making this story possible.

May "The Somerton Story" serve other educators to gain inspiration and discover new dimensions in meeting the educational needs of our migrant children.

Sincerely,

W. P. Shofstall

W. P. Shofstall, Ph. D.
Superintendent
State Department of Public Instruction

WELCOME.

You and your friends are invited to take a personally conducted tour of the Somerton School District No. 11, Somerton, Arizona. We regret the limitation of the printed word but feel that you will find the trip and its numerous stops both interesting and revealing of what is being accomplished in migrant child education in one small district in the southwestern corner of Arizona.

Our starting point deserves just a brief description. Somerton is 10 miles south of Yuma, Arizona, and 9 miles north of the Mexican border. Mostly a residential community, Somerton is in the center of a long established farming and citrus area, thanks to the judicious use of water to put desert land into production. The school district draws from the town as well as from surrounding farms, ranches, and labor camps for its enrollment of 950 students through grade 8.

With this setting, the school has always had many children whose parents seek employment in agriculture or related crop activities. Since these families follow the crops from one area or state to another, they are labeled as migrants. In Somerton's case, the migrant child is often bilingual and of a Mexican-American background. Some children moving into the area from Mexico know only the Spanish language.

For many years, the Somerton School served its patrons as well as it could, despite a small assessed valuation and a fluctuating student enrollment. To have several hundred more students at one time of the year than at another time makes budget preparation extremely difficult. Budgets are planned for an entire fiscal year, teachers are hired for a year's contract, and the schools do their best in advance to have sufficient supplies and equipment ready by September, not ever really knowing how many migrant students might be enrolled in any given year.

A special problem affecting any child who moves from one school to another is his adjustment to a new program. Migrant children have long been handicapped by the many moves from one school to another, with each school providing its own individual, usually highly rigid course of study. The migrant child who has been further handicapped by language and social barriers has not often been a well educated child.

Though Somerton parents, school board members, administrators, and teachers had long been interested in seeking improvements for the migrant child and the district in general, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-10) proved to be the means for a better program. With the personnel and Title I Migrant funds ready, a new program was launched in 1967. Our trip through these pages will see what that program is now, what it has been, and what it promises for the future, for Somerton and for any other school district in the country that might benefit from the results gained thus far.

Of interest along the first stages of the journey are the added facilities previously unavailable to Somerton students. No one would ever consider these to be original or innovative; but with them available, innovative and exemplary programs have been developed and are in operation.

An example is the first stop at the kindergarten building, a three-room portable steel structure with sliding partitions for team instruction or individual class work. Research has tended to support pre-first grade instruction, and the Somerton language-experience and readiness units at this level have been proved by tests to be extremely valuable. Though not directly a part of the school's program now, the Somerton Migrant Day Care Center, opened in early 1968, has also helped to prepare the child for his elementary school education. During the summer of 1968, the school actually did operate the Day Care Center for six weeks. Those children three years of age and older were a part of the school's summer session and were included in as many aspects of the instructional, nutritional, and health programs as possible. Normally, the Day Care Centers throughout the state are operated by the Migrant Opportunity Program, but Somerton's center and the school are continuing to work closely, to share facilities, and to coordinate programs as much as possible.

Continuing on the journey, the next stop is the school nurse's office. Before Title I, Somerton health needs were handled by public health nurses. Though they were highly efficient and capable, they were not often at school when emergencies arose or when continuing programs needed to be established. A school nurse now works daily to care for all health needs, and some of the migrant children have great needs. Help is provided, whether it be in the form of dental or medical care, or in some related area. Doctors and dentists in the area have been most cooperative in Somerton's health program and have pledged continued support. One dentist put it this way:

"When a cute 7-year-old cried in happiness as she thanked me for fixing her teeth and allowing her to eat for the first time since she could remember, without pain, I became a believer!"

Before pulling in for a lunch break, we need to have a quick look at three ungraded primary classrooms. A detailed section will follow later outlining the instructional program, but the pause at this time is enough to see children studying in what are called transition classes. The term is handy since the school saw that some children, for many different reasons, simply were not ready for the material usually presented in first, second, or third grade classes. The transition class helps the child to achieve at his own levels; ungraded materials are suited to the child instead of trying to fit the child into a grade level, an effort not unlike fitting one's foot into a shoe size four or five sizes too small or too large. The effort is, of course, individualized as much as possible. The classroom teacher's role is far removed from that of what might be called the traditional approach. To reach this point, much training and inservice work have taken place, with more to follow, although the details will be discussed at another stopping place.

That meal stop is naturally enough at the school cafeteria. Though the district has always provided a hot lunch program, the migrant plan calls for a breakfast as well. Prices are minimal for everyone. Those who cannot pay can still eat, and many migrant children know what it is to have mothers and fathers out of work between crops or because of the weather or for other reasons. The school feels that its nutritional program is as important as any other for these children, and the personnel work hard to provide the very best meals for everyone.

Back on the journey again, the direction is towards the intermediate and junior high school sections of the school. Three added programs for these children are home economics, industrial arts, and physical education, all three being housed in new facilities. No attempt is made in any of these programs to specialize as much as the students will be doing as they go on into the secondary school. Rather, the programs are intended to expand the child's horizons, to introduce a boy or a girl to the world of vocational training, and to strengthen the child's cultural understanding of the world around him.

The physical education programs take on added importance since washing machines and dryers are provided and are often used. Many of Somerton's children do not have the same type of showering or bathing facilities at home that are provided by the school. Many of the children do not have the facilities to keep their clothes as clean as they might want them. Not uncommon in the physical education program is for a child to dress out for his physical education class, participate, shower, and then put on clean, dry clothes that have been washed and dried while he was outside with his classmates.

Another aspect of the girls' physical education and home economics programs was started during summer school in 1968. Called Personal Grooming, the program attempts to help girls with some basic information about shampooing, make-up applications, manicures, personal hygiene, and other directly related concerns. With the help of several professional beauticians from Somerton, the teachers have found that the migrant girls are developing more poise and self-confidence from this program than from anything else that they have attempted. Throughout the entire program, the development of a stronger self-image for every child is a constant goal of the instructional staff, and instruction similar to Personal Grooming will no doubt help teachers to reach that goal sooner and more effectively.

Upon leaving the physical education area, we move into the Resource Center. Formerly a gymnasium and auditorium, this facility has been renovated with a lowered ceiling, floor covering, modern lighting, refrigeration, study carrels, sufficient shelving, and a wealth of library and audio-visual materials. The stop here deserves to be a lengthy one since the Resource Center is the heart of the instructional program, the pride of the community, and the receiving place for new educational equipment.

Much of the inservice training and university course work is held in the Center because of its facilities. A look at teacher training is slated for another stopping place, but anyone entering the Center at any time is likely to find a teacher, or the district's dozen teacher aides, parents and district residents, and students from all levels using the Center's materials for one purpose or another.

Teachers might very well be looking through the card catalogue to see what materials are available for a unit study of any particular subject. They will be finding exactly what books, periodicals, pamphlets, overhead transparancies, film strips, films, pictures, and records are available to them. As the unit idea develops, the aides will very likely be gathering the materials for the classroom, along with any equipment needed, although most classrooms are equipped with overhead projectors, record players, film strip projectors, and other equipment.

Teachers might be noticed in the rear of the Center previewing one of the many films on file. As an early leader in the migrant education program, Somerton was designated as a film center for other migrant programs in the southwestern section of Arizona. Several hundred films are now available for all teachers of migrant children, and a program exists for constantly previewing additional films for possible purchase or replacement.

Although occupying an inconspicuous corner in the rear of the Center, the district's television studio is very much a part of the total instructional program. Somerton's audio-visual director organized and installed the instructional television setup so that it reaches every classroom and learning area and can be expanded easily as the school grows. In the studio are video tape recorders, cameras, and other related equipment, some of it portable for classroom use. Perhaps the biggest use thus far of television has been recording student activities, making demonstration tapes, and teacher training.

Students who are involved in any type of culminating activity seem to respond with more effort and quality when they know that their presentations will be placed on video tape, and they will be seeing and hearing again, almost immediately, what they have done. Teachers have found that students are their own worst critics, and television viewing is no exception. On occasion, students have been televised doing a discussion, a play, or a program; they have then reviewed their efforts via video tape; they have then insisted that they be given another chance to try again in order to improve and to try harder to strengthen their presentations.

Teachers also have television available for improving techniques, approaches, and general presentations. To be effective, television for the teacher has to be available when it is needed or wanted. When too many

pressures might be exerted for its use, or when other approaches would work better, television for teacher training might better be used in other ways. Teachers are finding, however, that demonstration video tapes can be extremely valuable. When a certain approach does not have the desired results, a teacher might view a tape to see how another person, usually a master teacher, would present a particular concept or area of study. More and more universities are also preparing tapes for teacher training and making these available to schools having the equipment to use them.

As more research is available and as Somerton's television program grows, travelers through this area in the future will very likely see the type of program where the teacher can request and have in her classroom any of the Resource Center's resources presented on her television monitor. Large group instruction is more of a likelihood in the very near future because of television. Even now, the school could present to every class at once the televising of an important national event, either live or on tape. What else lies in the future for television will depend upon research, teacher use, and creative personnel; without a doubt, though, that future with television for Somerton and other schools is definitely promising.

One last look before leaving the Resource Center for the time being would be at the number of adults using the library facilities. Since the school is located in the middle of the town, the Center is the logical place for housing the Somerton-Yuma County Library. An adult library is sectioned off from the rest of the Center, although junior high students from Somerton and area high school and college students attending school in Yuma use this section also. The migrant program has provided the district with various home-school liaison workers in the past, and among their many achievements in working with parents has been to inform all adults of the Resource Center and its availability to everyone. The school has also been able to keep the Resource Center open at night for supervised study and for use by anyone in need of library or instructional materials.

Upon leaving the Resource Center, then, we conclude the first portion of our journey. Though hurried at times and superficial at other

stops, this first portion should serve satisfactorily for the next journey, which features inservice and teacher training for migrant education.

CLASSROOM PROJECTS are often placed in the Resource Center so that everyone can see what a group has done during a particular unit of instruction. Since Somerton is close to the border, many projects are concerned with Mexico and Central America.

SPECIAL HATS made for a classroom activity add an extra touch for first graders enjoying lunch. Most of the same children had a nourishing breakfast four hours earlier.

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE receives a boost from most field trips, but a special trip for everyone throughout the year is to the Marine Corps Air Service facility near Yuma.

BULLETIN BOARD displays can inform readers, as this display does in telling its readers of the many services and facilities of the Somerton School Library, or Resource Center.

CARD CATALOGUE information helps anyone to find the Resource Center materials easily and quickly. Once a student finds his material, he might then be able to use a study carrel.

The journey through the inservice training program for teachers of migrant children will not take us through "The Halls of Ivy"; rather we will travel through the classrooms, Resource Center, and other facilities of the Somerton School.

The inservice program was initiated because the administrative staff at Somerton felt that the teacher, as a trained professional, was one of the most important factors in any innovative program. Recent results from the United States Office of Education's "First Grade Reading Study" fully support this idea. However, a realistic look at the situation revealed the fact that Somerton, like most migrant schools, was located far from universities, and most of the teachers did not have access to modern, specialized graduate courses. Teachers of migrant children have special needs because the children they teach have special needs. Therefore, a two-year teacher training program was started early in 1967.

The administrative staff met with officials from Arizona State University's Reading Center, and at that time the objectives of the teacher training program were formulated to be as follows:

I. Primary Grades

A. Develop a reading and language readiness program for kindergarten and grade 1.

B. Develop a system for restructuring current classroom materials (Directed Reading Activities).

C. Help teachers to acquire an understanding of high priority word recognition and comprehension skills for primary grades.

D. Develop materials, using audio-visual techniques, for Mexican-American children. These materials are to be based on the actual experiences of the child.

II. Intermediate Grades

A. Employ the Unit Approach in the content areas of social studies and language.

B. Help teachers to acquire techniques of individual testing in reading and basic reading skills for intermediate teachers.

C. Deal with problems of scheduling, grouping, and material preparation in the intermediate grades.

III. Total Elementary School

A. Attempt to recommend a scope and sequence for reading development in grades 1 thru 8.

B. Attempt to coordinate activities related to the classroom programs in reading and language development.

In order to see how the teacher training program was started, let us go back in time to the spring of 1967. At that time, several workshops were held. During these workshops, the teachers were introduced to basic word recognition and comprehension techniques and units of instruction. As a follow-up to these workshops another inservice program was held during the 1967 summer school project. At this time the teachers had an opportunity to try the new innovative instructional programs introduced during the spring workshops. Units were developed and taught. Newly acquired teaching techniques in word recognition and comprehension were also tried. In addition, teachers were introduced to individual diagnostic reading tests. Needless to say, the project was a rewarding experience because the teachers were able to try new ideas, methods, and materials. At the end of the summer session, most of the teachers expressed the desire to transfer their newly acquired skills, ideas, and programs to the regular school year program.

At this turn of the road, it was felt that direct contact with each teacher would facilitate the transfer of skills acquired during the summer school program. Therefore, Dr. Nicholas J. Silvaroli, Arizona State University, worked directly with selected middle and upper grade

teachers. He helped them to develop and to carry out new units of instruction in conjunction with the personnel in the Resource Center. At the same time, Dr. Jann Skinner, also of Arizona State University, worked with the primary grade teachers. First grade teachers explored and developed readiness programs in the areas of language development, visual perception, and auditory perception. Second and third grade teachers were introduced to and used a variety of new primary grade reading materials such as R. Van Allen's Language Experience in Reading, SRA Kits, and BRL Programmed Readers.

The journey through the teacher training program was now ready for a new turn. In conjunction with the 1968 summer school, a six-hour college credit course was offered. All teachers participating in the summer school project took this course, which was designed especially for teachers of migrant children. The course had two divisions: a practicum and a lecture period. During the practicum, the teachers tutored a child from the summer project for an hour a day, under the supervision of two practicum supervisors. The lecture periods were devoted to the areas of language development, word recognition, comprehension skills, sensitivity training, and the unit approach to teaching. As ideas, methods, and materials were introduced in the lecture periods, they were immediately implemented into the program the following day in the classrooms. In this way, the course content and the on-going program simultaneously contributed to the enrichment of the students' curriculum and the teacher training program.

Several specialists from Somerton School also cooperated in the teacher training program. For example, Mrs. Leah Slaughter, English as a Second Language specialist, would initiate a TESL lesson related to the classroom unit topic, and the classroom teacher would then complete and follow up the lessons. Mr. Verdun Tritch, music specialist, correlated and taught all the music activities in the classroom. This approach allowed the classroom teacher to learn some basic techniques of TESL and music while the Spanish-speaking children were learning both the English language and related areas.

The emphasis in the workshops, college credit course, and other services has been on the classroom teacher as an informed professional, and it has been successful because most of the teachers are now using

more effective programs and achieving desired results. The following section of evaluation helps to illustrate this point.

EVALUATING THE 1968 SUMMER SCHOOL PROJECT

During the college credit course, the teachers were taught how to administer and interpret an individual, diagnostic reading test, the Classroom Reading Inventory. The staff of Somerton School felt that the most effective means of evaluating the program was through the CRI because the most important factor was the actual achievement of the individual child rather than an estimate of group achievement.

The Classroom Reading Inventory (CRI) is a non-standardized, individual reading achievement measure. It is administered on an individual rather than a group basis. Part I has eight graded word lists, pre-primer through the sixth reader level. In this part of the test the teacher analyzes the child's phonetic and structural analysis skills. Part II consists of eight graded oral paragraphs, pre-primer through the sixth reader level. This part of the test helps the teacher determine the child's independent, instructional and frustration levels in the areas of word recognition and comprehension. A total reading achievement score is also determined from this part of the test. In analyzing the results of the CRI the instructional levels for each individual child were established in word recognition, comprehension and total reading achievement.

TABLE I

	A-Statistic[1]
Word Recognition (in context)	0.0486*
Comprehension	0.0385*
Total Reading	0.0325*

N = 131 *Significant at the .001 level

The results of Table I suggest that there was a significant difference in reading achievement in the areas of word recognition in context, comprehension and total reading scores. These results, based on the CRI, indicate that reading achievement among migrant children was significantly effected by the summer school programs.

1. British Journal of Psychology, 1955, Vol. 46, P. 225-6.

TABLE II

	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean
Word Recognition (in context)	1 yr. 6 mo.	2 yr. 0 mo.
Comprehension	1 yr. 7 mo.	2 yr. 2 mo.
Total Reading	1 yr. 4 mo.	1 yr. 9 mo.

Table II shows the mean results from the three sub-tests of the CRI. The mean gain in word recognition between the pre and post testing was four months. The mean gains in comprehension and total reading achievement were five months over the five week program.

It is believed that the significant increase in reading achievement of the migrant children at Somerton was the direct result of the improved methods, techniques and programs used by the teachers. The trained, competent professional in the classroom was the key to success.

Where do we go from here? Readers of this pamphlet are just about through with their journey, but the programs at Somerton are continuing full speed ahead. The ultimate destination will not be reached quickly or easily, for that will be for the school district to provide the finest possible education for all of its students. The major point, though, is that the journey is headed in the right direction now, and Somerton's migrant children and all others will benefit from the opportunity to be included.

Many words could describe the present program, but high on the list would be "refinement." The district now has the buildings, adequate equipment and materials, and a trained faculty. From here would be the need to refine and polish the present programs, and this is being done now. As changes are made in the faculty, the training must continue, with one notable difference in the future. Rather than having university consultants working with the staff, the district plans to reach the point where several teachers will have adequate knowledge of all the programs to serve as supervisors of instruction. The supervisors would be in better positions to help new teachers, to work in the classrooms for improved programs, and to coordinate all learning activities within a given area of the school. Several teachers have already reached this point and will be ready to assume supervisory responsibility within a short time.

Other areas of attention are for additional parental involvement in the form of parent-teacher conferences, additional home-school liaison work, and an extension of the school day for adult education and recreational programs. For the first time, parent conferences were held this fall, and all parents responded well above expectations. Parents of migrant children were almost 100 percent strong in meeting with teachers at all levels, and everyone is sure that the home-school relationship has definitely become much stronger because of the conferences. This type of program will also be modified, strengthened, and encouraged for the future.

What Somerton has done and what it plans for the future is probably an example of what Alexis De Tocqueville had in mind more than one hundred years ago when he wrote in Democracy in America, "America is a land of wonders, in which everything is in constant motion and every change seems an improvement...No natural boundary seems to be set to the efforts of man; and in his eyes what is not yet done is only what he has not yet attempted to do."

Thank you for the pleasure of your company on this journey. If you ever have the opportunity, please consider this an invitation to visit Somerton for a current, actual journey.

ART ACTIVITIES for younger children are worked into classroom units. Older children can take art as a separate subject for the opportunity to develop creativity, art fundamentals, and an appreciation of all aspects of art.

UNIT WORK often means a vast accumulation of many items related to a particular study. Among those items for a unit on the desert can be various snakes, insects, and other living things. Often children show more enthusiasm for this phase of a unit than the teacher.

DAILY NEWSPAPERS are among the many materials available in the Resource Center. Since many migrants do not receive a daily newspaper or any magazines, the Center serves a special need by having these publications conveniently placed for use by all.

ESL INSTRUCTION, or English As a Second Language, is available to every child whose English language might need strengthening. In addition to working directly with children, the ESL staff will also assist other teachers in how to help bilingual students.